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EXPLORATION ESSENCE

by Robert Turvene

Robert Turvene worked for the federal government for thirty-two years, most of the time in Washington, D.C., and also in posts that took him to San Francisco, Europe, and Asia. To survive the bureaucratic world, he maintained a parallel life that included Esalen Institute retreats, Zen and Vipassana meditation, Taoist training, and participation in TMI residential programs. Robert attended EXPLORATION ESSENCE in May 2003 and wrote this letter to Laurie Monroe.

Dear Laurie,

The last time I wrote to you it was to complain about a program and to explain why I left it halfway through. This time I write to compliment you on TMI's exploration into spirituality. I feel exceedingly fortunate to have been in *EXPLORATION ESSENCE* led by Peter Russell and Karen Malik and would in all likelihood take the course again if it were to be offered next year.

Although I learned much from Pete's brilliant lectures and Karen's sensitive and guiding talks, it was my experiences that were so important to me. They were transformational. To say what happened for me in one of the midway debriefings after an exercise, I used an analogy from chemistry. I arrived, I said, as a supersaturated solution, a particle was dropped in, and all crystallized for me. Everything was (is) all right with the world; all was (is) all right with me. As I said in the closing circle, I felt reborn, and at seventy-five years of age that is a good state of being. Enrolling in *EXPLORATION ESSENCE* has given me a quantum leap in my spiritual and psychological growth.

Now that I am back at home, the transformation has abided, and I sense that it will be permanent. It was a major event for me, and TMI made it possible by being open to new explorations. Others will benefit from my experiences at TMI when I begin to teach a meditation class in the adult education program here at the College of William and Mary.

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